

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 JUSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /048 W
-----040612 181017Z /13

O 180932Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8788

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPON, KS, US

SUBJ: KOREAN MEDIA ON PARK TONG SUN CASE

REF: SEOUL 397 (DTG 170851Z JAN 78)

SUMMARY: PTS CASE OVERSHADOWED JAN 18 BY ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE. MAJOR POINTS COVERED: CIVILETTI' STATEMENTS TO PRESS AND JUSTICE VICE MINISTER YI'S PRAISE FOR CIVILETTI; RELEASE OF MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU); PROSPECTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF SEOUL INTERROGATION TRANSCRIPT SIGNED BY PTS IN LIEU OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY, AND CONG CAPUTO'S PROPOSAL FOR CLOSED-DOOR TESTIMONY. END SUMMARY.

1. CIVILETTI SPOKE TO PRESS AT EMBASSY AND AGAIN AT AIRPORT BEFORE DEPARTING 1440 JANUARY 17. PRESS GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO STATEMENTS THAT: "AN EXTREMELY SMALL NUMBER" OF INDICTMENTS APPEAR LIKELY, WITH NO CURRENT US OFFICIALS INCLUDED; DESPITE MOU RESTRICTIONS, QUESTIONING WAS "VIRTUALLY UNRESTRICTED; PTS WILL GO TO US EIGHT WEEKS AFTER END OF INTERROGATION. CIVILETTI PRAISES "EXCELLENT COOPERATION OF ROKG" AND PROMISES, ACCORDING TO AM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHOSUN ILBO, "TO CONTACT CONGRESS TO SEE THAT PTS NOT TESTIFY IN CONGRESS". SEVERAL PAPERS NOTE QUESTION TO CIVILETTI, "WAS PTS QUESTIONED AS TO RELATIONSHIP WITH ROKG OFFICIALS", A: "THE CONTENTS OF THE QUESTIONING HAD TO DO WITH THE SALE OF RICE".

2. ALL PAPERS REPORT JUSTICE VICE MINISTER YI JONG WON'S

AIRPORT STATEMENT THAT THE RESPECTS CILILETTI'S "FOR-BEARANCE AND PERSEVERANCE". SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG ILBO ADDS, QUOTE: "HIS STATELY BEARING AND BROAD KNOWLEDGE EARN RESPECT FOR AMERICAN OFFICIALDOM. THESE QUALITIES HAVE BEEN EVIDENT IN THE EARLIER NEGOTIATIONS AND IN THE INTERROGATION, AS HAVE HIS PASSION AND CONVICTION IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY'S INTERESTS." TONE OF ALL PRESS COMMENT ON CIVILETTI GENERALLY RESPECTFUL.

3. CHOSUN ILBO QUOTES Y JONG WON AS SAYING TIME AND DATE ARE NOT YET AGREED UPON FOR SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE OF MUTUAL PROSECUTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT.

4. ALL PAPERS REPORT, MOST WITH VERBATIM TEXT BUT WITHOUT COMMENTARY, RELEASE OF MOU.

5. CHUNGANG ILBO'S WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT REPORTS THAT, AT CONG CAPUTO'S SUGGESTION, HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE HAS NOW AGREED TO ACCEPT CLOSED-DOOR TESTIMONY FROM PTS, INSISTING ON OPEN TESTIMONY LATER ONLY IF CLOSED SESSION REVEALS NEED FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST INCUMBENT CONGRESSMEN. ALSO QUOTES JAWORSKI AS SAYING JANUARY 15 THAT HE WANTS KIM DONG JO MORE THAN HE DOES PTS, SPECULATES THAT THIS STATEMENT WILL CAUSE FRICTION WHICH WILL UNDO THE COMMITTEE'S CLOSED-TESTIMONY PLAN.

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6. CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ON WHETHER CONGRESS WILL ACCEPT TRANSCRIPT IN LIEU OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY. HANKUK ILBO FLATLY PREDICTS THAT JAWORSKI WILL REFUSE ANY COMPROMISE.

7. PROSECUTOR MICHEL IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE LIE DETECTOR WAS USED ON JANUARY 17, AND THAT QUESTIONING "AW WE PLAN IT, WILL LAST ONE MORE WEEK".
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BRIBERY, PRESS COMMENTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL00438
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780026-0602
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780149/aaaabpkm.tel
Line Count: 103
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Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SEOUL 397
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3753584
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN MEDIA ON PARK TONG SUN CASE
TAGS: SOPN, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f4fc3be2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014